5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RLl Turkestan RLl

177 without the surrender of the local ethos. It is strongest and most vital in
668 societies which, like the mid-20th-century Muslims of Central Asia, are in the very throes of this process of cultural fusion.

The Russian influx, uninterrupted since the beginning of the present
167 century, does not hinder this development except where it is accompanied by
177 large-scale physical destruction of the natives (as was the case with the
668 Kazakhs). On the contrary, it rather strengthens it. In the Central Asian context, the Russian population with its Russian culture must be regarded primarily as an agent of Westernization, and hence as a force accelerating the transition of the natives to full-fledged nationhood. The Russians not only tend to promote the spread of such ideas as secularism, utility, and anti-traditionalism, but also by their very presence and cultural cohesion, to induce the native to define his own national status. The Russian influx thus has not led to the emergence of a new, third nationality, "Soviet" in its culture, but to the split of the population of Central Asia into two parts: this split has tended to crystallize the national consciousness of both groups.

178 Without indulging in the dangerous and fruitless game of prediction
668 (which always presupposes some degree of historical pre-determination),
648 it is still possible, on the basis of the evidence adduced above, to arrive at some general political conclusions from the cultural tendencies discernible in Soviet Central Asia.

In the first place, Soviet Central Asia may be expected to grow in importance as an internal problem for the regimes, present and future, ruling Russia and its possessions. The Muslim natives, formed into full-fledged nationalities with settled populations, well-defined cultures, and indigenous intelligentsias, will be far more troublesome to their rulers than the disunited, half-nomadic, Islam-dominated Muslim tribes and ethnic groups of the past have been. In the second place, the entire area of Central Asia, including Chinese Turkestan with which Russian Central Asia has always been closely connected, may well tend to move with time in the direction of independent statehood. It is not inconceivable that this vast territory may same day be encompassed in a new Turkic, Muslim state, oriented toward the Middle East, and serving as a buffer among Russia, China, and India. In the past this has been prevented by Russian conquest and Russia's policy of supporting Chinese authority in Sinkiang out of fear of British and Japanese activity in this sensitive region. With Britain and Japan out of Central Asia, Russo-Chinese cooperation may be less intensive than before, and any possible disagreements among the great powers bordering on this area will only benefit the national aspirations of the local Muslims. Whether or not this will occur cannot, of course, be foreseen. But so long as the Central Asian Muslims continue to preserve their cultural peculiarities and, under Communist pressures, to evolve the characteristics of modern nationalities, as they have done in Soviet territories, so long will the cultural and ethnic bases for such a development be present.